if so, the details thereof; and

if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): (a) to-(c) Ministry of Coal had invited applications in November, 2006 for allocation of coal blocks earmarked for power and non-power sector through Government company dispensation route. In response, the Maharashtra State Mining Corporation, an undertaking of Government of Maharashtra, had also submitted applications for allocation of Manoharpur, Chhattibariatu South, Dip side of Manoharpur, Chendipada, Chendipada-II, Baitarni West, Mandakini B coal blocks for power sector and Rabodih, Agarzari, Warora, Bicharpur and Sahapur coal blocks for commercial purposes. Out of these coal blocks, the Maharashtra State Mining Corporation has been allocated Agarzari and Warora coal blocks independently.

Apart from the above, in August, 2006, Marki-Zari-Zamini Adkoli coal block was allocated to the Maharashtra State Mining Corporation independently and Gare Palma Sector II coal block was allocated jointly with the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board.

Looting of explosives

†3250. MISS ANUSU1YA UIKEY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that efforts have been made to loot the explosives from the magazines of the coal mines in Chhindwarda district;

if so, the details thereof;

whether these incidents of looting have taken place due to improper security arrangements of magazines by the management;

whether appropriate security arrangements have been made in this regard; and

the action being taken by the coal management to stop the incidents of looting of explosives from the magazines in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(i) On the night of 09.02.2008 at Nandan-1 magazine at about 2.50 AM, approximately, 20 miscreants suddenly started pelting stones at the magazine. Due to alertness of guards on duty and security patrolling party reaching in time the miscreants could not succeed to loot the explosives. 30 rounds of gun firing by the armed guards took place to thwart the efforts of miscreants.'First Information Report (FIR) as lodged by Western Coalfields Limited (WCL) with Police Station, Damua and a case u/s 147/336 IPC dated 10.02.2008 was registered against the unknown criminals. Later on, as a follow up to see the security arrangements at this explosive magazine, DIG Chhindwara Range, visited Nandan-1 magazine on 12.02.2008.

(ii) On the night of 08.04.2008, approximately 12 unknown miscreants attacked Nandan magazine at about 12.40 AM and started pelting stones at the security personnel on duty. The security personnel on duty at watch tower fired 6 rounds from gun to ward off the criminals and also sounded the alarm. The miscreants fled away. The matter was reported to the Police Station, Damua on 09.04.2008 and FIR was lodged by the Kanhan Area management of WCL.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. The security arrangements at the magazines of Peach and Kanhan Areas under Chhindwara District are proper and adequate. There are watch towers fitted with communication *e.g.* sirens/telephones. Lighting arrangements are adequate. Barbed wire fencing/chain linked fencing is installed around the magazines. Explosives and detonator rooms are having "Godrej" motorized locks and during night hours the magazines are guarded by the armed guards. Following security arrangements have been made by WCL:

During night hours armed guards are deployed at explosive magazine.

Installation of watch towers at the main/service magazines having provision of siren/telephone.

Adequate lighting facilities for better illumination.

125 CISF personnel on internal security duties w.e.f. 16.10.2007 have been deployed at Pench Area. Efforts are on to deploy another 231 CISF personnel at Pench Area.

Joint survey for deployment of CISF personnel at Kanhan Area has been carried out.

Instructions have been issued to all the areas that all the explosives during transit must be escorted by the security personnel.

Regular monitoring with the areas by Head Quarters (HQ) is being done.

Instructions have been issued from HQ for carrying time to time mock rehearsals at explosive magazines and during transportation as preparation to counter attacks on the magazines, which are being implemented.

(e) Following steps have been taken by the coal company to stop incidents of looting of explosives:—

(i) The local area management of Kanhan Area as well as Chief Security Officer (CSO), WCL, have requested the DIG of Police, Chhindwara Range, for posting of 15 SAF personnel at the magazines of Kanhan Area, on payment basis.

(ii) Joint survey w.e.f. 24th March, 2008 for deployment of CISF has been carried out at 'Kanhan Area.

(iii) Night patrolling has been intensified with the help of local police and watch towers have been installed at all the magazines with communication facilities like siren/ telephones.

(iv) Antecedents verification of the explosive handlers by the police is ensured.

Giving coal mines to private sector

†3251. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

whether it is fact that Government is considering to hand over the management of coal mines of Chhindwara district to private sector;

if so, the names of coal mines being proposed to be handed over to the private sector;

the coal mines being proposed to be handed over and to whom; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.